

Corporate Policy Review Select Committee

A meeting of Corporate Policy Review Select Committee was held on Tuesday, 6th February, 2007.

Present: Cllr B Woodhead (Chair), Cllr D T Brown, Cllr Mrs S Fletcher, Cllr M Frankland, Cllr J M Lynch, Cllr Mrs M Rigg, Cllr Mrs B Robinson, Cllr Mrs M B Womphrey, Cllr M E Womphrey (Vice Councillor Lupton).

Officers: Ms B Campbell (PP), Mrs T Harrison, Miss S Johnson, Mrs J Trainer (LD).

Also in attendance: No other persons were present.

Apologies: Cllr K Dewison, Cllr A Larkin and Cllr K Lupton, Cllr Mrs E Nesbitt, Cllr R Patterson and Ms H Dean (PP).

1021 Minutes of the meeting held on 16th January 2007

Members considered the minutes of 16th January 2007.

CONCLUDED that the minutes of 16th January 2007 be approved and submitted to the following Council.

1022 Review of Meeting Venues

Mrs Campbell provided a presentation outlining disability access requirements in line with meeting venues.

Members raised issues relating to disability access and attitude of meeting organisers and attendees.

Members were reminded of the remit of the review and the limited time available, therefore the review could not look into and address all health and safety and disability issues and seek to resolve them in the time available.

To illustrate the size of the issues Mrs Campbell advised that if a full audit was to be carried out, the inspections alone would take two full days and would be a huge cost to the Council. Mrs Campbell pointed out that Stockton Borough Council were Disability Discrimination Act compliant.

Members requested a form be provided to Members upon election, which would enable them to advise of any disabilities they had as it was observed that Stockton Borough Council Employees were asked to complete an equal opportunities form, which went some way to helping the Council identify their needs. It was suggested that such a form could be included in the Members personal development plan.

Further to Members requests a checklist had been compiled to assist Members when carrying out site visits. Some of the Members of the Stockton Disability Advisory Group had volunteered to join Members on the site visits of the chosen venues to give their input.

Members requested minor amendments to the check list such as clarification on question 2 that parking was not permitted in front of dropped curbs, comment sections to be inserted and check list to be e-mailed to Members.

The Scrutiny Officer put forward recommendations for venues to be visited on the site visits, further to Members previous comments and recommendations. The venues were considered to be an accurate depiction of the cross section of venues available:

External Venues: Destiny Centre, Education Centre and Watersports Centre.

Operational Venues: Lecture Theatre, Stockton Library

Community Centres Venues: Clifton Avenue, Billingham

It was observed that there were no 'perfect' venues available to the Council and by improving aspects for one disability need could hinder the needs of another.

Further to a request at the previous meeting, Members were provided with a more details list of venues incorporating the venues available in Tees Active buildings and Community Centres.

Members were also provided with a breakdown of expenditure to external venues as per a Members request. It was observed that some of the venues had been used for large events and included catering for approximately 150 people, hence the high cost. There was a lot of partnership working which also resulted in the use of external venues.

Members were advised that whilst the cost seemed high for external venue expenditure, there was a cost to the maintenance and upkeep of internal venues which was included in the internal recharges which was not usually considered.

Members requested clarification on whether the expenditure provided included renaissance meetings as it was not clear. Members were advised that it would be investigated and reported back at the next meeting.

CONCLUDED that:

1. Mrs Campbell's presentation be noted.
2. Members will be provided with an amended check list in hard copy and e-mail version.
3. Financial information regarding venue expenditure of renaissance will be added to the breakdown of expenditure for external venues and provided at the next meeting.
4. Information will be provided regarding proposed policy relating to the booking of venues, at the next meeting.
5. Feedback on the site visits carried out by Members will be provided at the next meeting.

